

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL OF POPULAR LITERATURE

Science and Arts.

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 205.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5, 1857.

PRICE 1d.

SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE.

'NOTHING succeeds like success,' says the universal voice of Great Britain, speaking from all mouthpieces—especially loud from the great national speaking-trumpet, the *Times* newspaper. In all departments of human work and human play, Englishmen honour those who are visibly, conspicuously successful. Success is a sort of certificate of merit that every one can read and understand. It is not written in Latin, intelligible only to the few; but it carries the translation of 'doctissimus' and 'optimus' deep into the minds of the crowd. They honour the man who has done the thing he willed to do; quite as often, too, they honour the man who has done a thing he never willed anything about, but which he hit upon 'by luck,' as men say. To succeed in the world is a sort of religious duty with some folk—the only one they are very assiduous in performing. These people generally do succeed, because to will a thing strongly, to turn our hearts and brains constantly towards an object, is going more than half-way towards the attainment of it. These people are praiseworthy—worthy of the praise they get. To succeed in ever so small an undertaking in life, argues the exercise of certain highly respectable moral and intellectual qualities—courage, perseverance, patience, self-denial, and intelligent observation and reflection. True, successful people are not always very great or very wise; but it does not become the unsuccessful to disparage their achievements, as they do frequently, while they are sick with envy at the result of these achievements.

The most common objects of so-called success in the world are, to make a fortune, to found a family, or to make one's self famous. It is these objects steadily pursued for many generations by a large proportion of the British people, that has built up and consolidated our material prosperity, and has helped largely in our intellectual and spiritual greatness.

What a Yankee would call 'the eloquent capabilities' of success in life are great. It would bear a deal of talking about; but we should consider much of what might, could, or would be said in its glorification as mere talking for talking's sake—at all events, in this country, where no one lives upon the fatalism of the Turk, but where we believe that a man, in the common phrase, is the architect of his own fortunes. Practically, all successful men in this country put forth the strength, intellect, and will that are necessary to succeed, and leave the rest to a higher power. They take care to keep their powder dry, and then put their trust in Providence.

'The race is not always to the swift, or the battle

to the strong,' says the proverb. Solomon and other wise old men are gentle-hearted. This saying was meant as a kindly encouragement to the slow and weak, who are really anxious to make the best of their deficiency. The 'always' is their qualifying ray of hope. Let it shine ever before them, and lead them on to the utmost; but let no friend teach them to over-value its promise. It is false kindness which would lead the tortoise to disparage the hare's speed, or make the little Jacks of everyday life believe that giants will be easily overcome by them. God made the laws of nature like those of the Medes and Persians. Fire burns, water drowns a body heavier than itself, you do not gather grapes of thorns, wisdom from fools, nor tender acts from tigers. Let those who contend in the battle and the race rest assured that the strongest and the swiftest *must* win, if their other qualifications be on a par with those of their opponents. It is only when they are unusually defective in the will or power to turn their superiority to account they can fail. Hence the astonishment of the world when its Samsons and Atalantas are defeated; and the good-natured proverbs that cheer and encourage inferior people. 'The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.' Not always! So, courage, young Mediocrity! Do your best—it is sure to be worth something to the world, surer still to be worth immortality to your own soul. If you fail when you are doing your best towards God, it will count for you more than ten successes in the eyes of the world.

All honour to the successful man who succeeds, as most men do, by *fair* means! A successful rogue is rarely successful through a lifetime. The brilliant instances of roguery in the last few years go far to prove that. We are willing to admire the manly energy, courage, and industry which does something in the world. It is a beautiful thing to see a human being succeed in any right work—to see the requisite power put forth in the fittest way, and directed by adequate intelligence. Human skill in exercise has an irresistible charm for men; it is beautiful as well as useful; and we all love it; but we should love it no more than in reason.

The successful men of the world get credit for doing the work of the world. That portion of it that lies on and above the surface they do, in their day and generation; but those who have this visible, tangible something to shew for their labour, generally owe much to the unheard-of labours of their predecessors, who have been their *navvies*, and dug out rubbish, and laid the firm foundations of their edifices. To labour is the lot of man, and no one gains anything by shirking.

190420

Glory is something superadded to the reward of labour; but the true reward never fails the steady, honest worker whose power is equal to his task. So much work done buys such and such wages—health, peace, and competence. The successful man does more than the ordinary labourer; having more than ordinary means and faculty, he achieves a conspicuous work, and is honoured of men. How is it that the world's successful men are often—not to speak paradoxically—disappointed men? Because happiness or content has not essentially any connection with success in the world. If happiness be our being's end and aim, the successful men of the world do not hit that mark as often as their admirers suppose. Perhaps because these admirers do not draw a distinction we wish to draw.

Success in the world is a different thing from success in life, although in many instances individuals have attained both. These are they who noble ends by noble means pursue. Still, if the prizes and blanks in the lottery of the world were identical with success or failure in the objects of this earthly existence, it would be a sadder life than it is on this planet of ours, which yet 'goes sobbing through space,' as the poet says. It is not so. Each man and woman among us—the feeblest, the least endowed with good gifts—may live a life, develop his powers to the utmost of his means, and exercise them not all for self. He will then have succeeded in life, done the best with the earthly mantle of his soul; and he will not wish to throw it up in disgust, or say to his Maker, 'Why hast thou formed me thus?' To quote the expression of Balzac, in speaking of discontent in life and suicide: '*La vie est un vêtement; quand il est sale on le brosse; quand il est troué on le raccommode; mais on reste vêtu tant qu'on peut.*' (Life is a garment; when it is dusty, we brush it; when it is torn, we mend it; but we remain clothed as long as we can.) This is not taking a high view of the matter; it is merely making the best of a bad matter; but the life is no such bad matter as the cynics declare. It is quite possible for mere ordinary folks like you and me to achieve a great success in life, though we are unsuccessful in the world. 'Greater is he that ruleth his own spirit than he that taketh a city.' To rule one's own spirit, is to succeed in life—to live royally. Such self-subjection begets love and confidence in others. Women especially cling to those who are self-reliant and modest. It is true that some women love the proud and ambitious man who moves heaven and earth to compass his own honour; but such love is earthly in its nature, and dies out with prosperity or notoriety. Many a great man, too, has been unsuccessful in the world, but has lived successfully, working ever towards a high end, and pioneering the way for those who shall make a successful work before the world. The alchemists of the middle ages were many of them of this class; they did not deem their lives wasted or unsuccessful, though they did not achieve their definite purpose. The true way to succeed in life is to find out what God has fitted us for doing, and to do that as persistently as we can through all the lets and hinderances of our own nature, and the circumstances over which we have no control. We may fail in the special world's work we hoped to do, in the labour we loved; but we can learn to bear the disappointment, and take to something that may prosper with us. We can comfort ourselves by reflecting that another will do better what we had hoped to do, and that we can appreciate his worth, and praise him more meetly than another could who had not laboured in the same field. If we live in this spirit, we can never 'fail' in life—never sink down to wretchedness and weak despair. It will not make us unhappy to hear the sad laments

of the poets over the mutability of this life; we can listen to Shakspeare's melancholy cry—

When I consider everything that grows
Holds in perfection but a little moment,
That this huge state presenteth nought but shows, &c.—

and we can sympathise in it; but not so far as to forget that this rapid passing on from one stage to another of existence is merely a series of developments, of which what we call death is the closing one on earth—probably the opening one in another life. Success in this one consists in bearing with intelligent resignation, and working with intelligent energy, all that we are called upon to endure or to do. The two kinds of successful people—those who succeed in the world, and those who succeed in life—meet each with their reward: happy are they who succeed in both.

DROWNED, BUT NOT FOUND.

We are told that such are the numbers of London corpses now conveyed by the 'Funeral Trains,' that, upon arrival at the necropolises, the coffins get separated, and the processions mixed, so that you are as likely to be following another party as your own dear departed to his or her long home; a misapplication of sentiment sufficiently mortifying when you become aware of it, but not involving any lifelong wretched uncertainty, such as is suggested by the heading of this paper. Fancy the horror, even in the case of our dearest and nearest, of meeting him or her, on a sudden, above ground, whom we had concluded, years ago, to have been under water! Leaving out of the question our being her or his male or female relict, and our having chanced to marry again in the interim, or having published his or her *Remains*, without the smallest regard to private feelings, and taking the matter under as ordinary circumstances as such a thing can be taken, so that the little rencontre may occur in the most mitigated manner—not by moonlight or by twilight; not in Finsbury Square nor on Salisbury Plain, but—in Cheapside upon a Monday morning, yet how horrible is the bare idea of it! It is doubtful, perhaps, whether broad noonday and crowds of people going about their usual avocations would not heighten, by contrast, the terror of such a sight. As our gaze fell upon him or her, upon the opposite side of the roaring street, whom we had believed to be five fathom five in ocean, and to have suffered a sea-change these many years, how suddenly the hand would drop with which we were receiving our change, or with which we were hailing our omnibus. The poet has truly written that, for the most part, such supposed guests of Pluto (or Davy Jones) would find but an iron welcome upon their return. But supposing that one had been their heir, and had spent the policy of their life-insurance! I wonder what the poet would have said about it then. Having myself been secretary to a life-assurance company for many years, I know something about these matters. We, the company, are most unfeignedly distressed at the death of any of our customers, but we feel a satisfaction, melancholy indeed, but still a great satisfaction, in seeing the body, before we pay the piper—the policy. Within the present century, and soon after I was appointed to the Grand National and Provincial Costermongers' Friend Society, occurred the following circumstances: The G. N. P. C. F. S. did not confine itself to benefiting costermongers, of course, but took everybody's life it could get; amongst others, that of a young tinman, name, Robert Noggins, residence, Ipswich; peculiarity, weakness in the left leg—for which he wore an elastic stocking—insurance, four hundred pounds: a large sum for a tinman, we thought, and be sure we stuck it on to the premium, on account of the elastic stocking. He told our

doctor, in answer to the usual questions, that his uncle had died 'by accident'—tumbled off a tree with a rope round his neck, as we discovered afterwards; and as that sort of disease is in some measure hereditary, we were extra particular.

In rather less than five months after his admission, we received a letter from Joseph Noggins, his cousin and executor, written on mourning note-paper, in a black-edged envelope, with a black wafer:

IPSWICH, November 2.

'GENTLEMEN—I regret to have to inform you that my dear cousin Robert was drowned last evening at Lowestoft, while bathing from off the beach.'

'Drowned!' said our manager; 'ah, he doesn't say whether he's found.'

So I wrote an answer of condolence to Joseph Noggins, saying that the company would like to shew their respect for the departed, by sending down some trustworthy person to attend the inquest. We were referred, by return of post, to the advertisement columns of the *Times*, wherein we read that L.25 reward was offered for the recovery of the body of Robert Noggins, and L.2 for that of his watch. The unfortunate deceased, with a sort of foreboding, as it almost seemed, of his affecting end, had lately insured himself for the same amount of L.400 in two other offices besides our own; so that the three companies clubbed together, and instead of replying to the lawyers' letters, which daily arrived, upon the subject of the policy, we sent down a detective officer to Lowestoft.

This was what that gentleman gathered there, upon the sea-shore and other places, sauntering about, as it might be pleasure-seeking: That Robert Noggins had been residing at Lowestoft for a fortnight previous to his untimely death, having been recommended to try sea-bathing for his weak left leg; that he did bathe every day, and sometimes in the morning, not from a machine, but from the beach; that he bathed from the beach as late as seven o'clock upon the 1st of November at high-water, and was never seen afterwards; his clothes were found above high-water mark, but not his watch and not his elastic stocking; moreover, he had taken a great bag with him when he went to bathe; that the fishermen all assert that they have had no experience of a Lowestoft body not being found; that since L.25 had been offered for this particular 'party,' they have done their best both inshore and upon the sandbanks, and believe the melancholy event to be all gammon. To this opinion, our detective, in conclusion, cordially assents. The three companies accordingly resisted Cousin Joseph's several claims, in the absence of more certain proofs of Robert's demise, and received, in due course, notice of action.

After an interval of six weeks, a letter arrives from the enemy's solicitor, with news that the body is found—found in the river Humber, at Kingston-upon-Hull, and the inquest is to be held upon it on the following day. Off I start, within an hour, northward, by express train, in company with two of our clerks; the distance is so great that fast as we travel, we don't arrive at Kingston in time. The inquest is closed. We have an interview with the coroner, and he declines to interfere. The cousin of the deceased and two intimate friends have identified the body upon oath, and every legal regulation has been complied with. Then said we: 'We suspect fraud;' and laid before him our reasons for suspecting it. At last, he consented to the reopening of the inquest for one day; in the meantime, and unknown to the other party, we got permission for a neighbouring surgeon to examine the corpse very particularly; we got counsel, the next morning, to cross-examine the witnesses very particularly also.

'How did they identify the deceased person?'

'By his forehead, which was a remarkably high one.'

'And was that'—with indignation—'the sole ground upon which they had come into that court and taken oath?'

'No; the deceased person had remarkably long nails, and the corpse had very long nails also. There was the mark of an elastic stocking, such as the deceased was known to have worn, still traceable upon the left leg; and fourthly, there was a tooth missing from the lower jaw, and the deceased was known to have had a bottom tooth extracted.'

Our own medical witness then deposed.

Had carefully examined the corpse upon the preceding evening, and did not consider the forehead to be a particularly high one; it was neither a high forehead nor a low forehead; there was no mark of an elastic stocking upon the left leg, so far as he (witness) could observe, at all; with regard to the length of the nails, the corpse had not any nails whatever (sensation); nevertheless, the action of water during a long period, which had destroyed the nails, had bared the skin beneath in such a manner as to give the appearance of long nails, perhaps, to a superficial observer. Fourthly, had examined the lower jaw very minutely; and although there was a space between the middle teeth, it arose from a decayed tooth whose stump was still remaining; no tooth in the bottom row had ever been extracted.

Our counsel pressed these contradictory assertions upon the attention of the jury, and commented upon the exceeding improbability of a body drowned at Lowestoft finding its way past the Wash and other convenient inlets to Kingston-upon-Hull. Finally, he threw out the delicate suggestion that Joseph Noggins, being, as we had discovered, a sexton, had opportunities of setting bodies afloat which were not enjoyed by everybody. All this opposed to the fact that the cousin and the two friends still swore to the similitude of their dear departed as stoutly as ever, so bewildered the jury, that they returned an open verdict, to the effect that there was not sufficient evidence to establish the identity of the body.

On the next day, the corpse was interred with considerable pomp, its three identifiers in deep mourning and tears following it in three funeral-coaches to the church-yard. One thing only was wanting to prove their entire conviction that it was poor Robert Noggins and no other, and that was, that they resolutely refused to pay the fisherman who found it the L.25 reward advertised for its recovery; and under these circumstances, the G. N. P. C. F. S. considers itself also justified in not paying the policy.

FROM ANCONA TO LORETTO.

THE famous *Santa Casa*, or holy house of Loretto, has long been recognised as the principal attraction of the Marche; indeed, it is so well known to tourists, that I should have left my excursion thither unrecorded, had not this omission rendered my picture of local manners and customs incomplete.* Little as the Anconitans are given to locomotion, I never met an instance of one who had not visited the shrine at least once in his or her life, whilst many make it a point of conscience to repair thither every year. The distance from Ancona by the high-road is twenty miles—a journey of five hours, in that country of steep hills and slow coaches; but travellers are generally disposed to overlook the tedium of the way in their admiration of the scenery it discloses. Few, however, have any conception of the still more picturesque features of the circuitous route through which, one lovely evening in June, we pursued our pilgrimage to Loretto.

There was nothing very original or brilliant in our

* See *Chambers's Journal*, Nos. 151, 186, 187.

party. The V—— family—the same with whom we went to the rural christening—joined the expedition, too adventurous for any of our Italian friends; the consul, the Chevalier V——, this time escorting his wife and lively Polish daughters, very proud, as he protested, of the charge my uncle had delegated to him as his representative towards my cousins and unworthy self. He was a good man, that dear chevalier, in every acceptation of the term, but his sphere was certainly not a scrambling gipsying enterprise, such as we contemplated, and his presence would have proved hopelessly depressing, had it not been for the antidote furnished by the indomitable spirits of a lieutenant and two little midshipmen belonging to an English frigate lying in the harbour, who had obtained permission to accompany us. The fair hair and ruddy cheeks of the middie, reminding Madame V—— of her own absent boys, had pleaded irresistibly in their favour; their extreme juvenility too, she argued, screened her from any breach of the *convenances* she was always so solicitous to maintain. As to the young lieutenant, he was a married man, carried about his baby's likeness in a locket, and spent fabulous sums in presents for his wife. No anxiety could therefore be felt on his score, no dread of exciting the remonstrances of a certain black-browed parish priest, who, I very well know, left the poor lady no peace on the impropriety of throwing her daughters into the temptations of English male heretical society.

It had been arranged that we should walk the first five miles of the way, with the exception of the *consolessa*, who was provided with a donkey, as far as an unoccupied country-house, kindly placed at our disposal by its owners; thence, after needful rest and refreshment, we were to ascend the Monte d'Ancona, a lofty mountain, famed for a Trappist convent on its summit, and a magnificent range of prospect. To reach the top before daybreak, in order to see the sun rise, was an essential feature in our programme; it was the only subject connected with nature on which the Anconitans ever shewed any enthusiasm. Several of our acquaintances had, in their youth, they told us, braved the exertion and loss of rest to witness the *levata del sole* from the mount. Others regretted they had not the energy to attempt it. None ridiculed our undertaking. I felt very curious to behold what awoke such unusual admiration.

We were all in a cheerful mood, and not a little diverted, as we passed through the narrow streets on our way to the gate, at the astonishment excited by the appearance of Madame V—— on a very antiquated chair-saddle, upon her long-eared steed. The people flocked to look at her with unrestrained curiosity, till the consul turned suddenly round, and apostrophising the gazers, inquired sternly, whether they considered the foreign custom of riding upon an ass more wonderful than their own of being driven by a cow. The justness of this reasoning, or rather the energy with which it was enunciated, having produced an instantaneous effect in the dispersion of the crowd, we were suffered to proceed unmolested, followed by a second donkey laden with provisions.

Our route, immediately after quitting the town, lay near the cliffs forming the line of coast behind the promontory on which Ancona is built, in singular contrast to the sandy beach extending northward towards Sinigaglia and Pesaro. Sometimes the road quite skirted the edge of the precipice, and deviating from the undulations of the cliffs, would change the marine to a pastoral landscape, and lead to paths shaded by trees and flowering hedges, admitting occasional glimpses of mountains in the distance.

For the next two or three miles, our course lay entirely between hedges, screening the *possessioni*, or small farms, into which the land is subdivided from

the road. It was rapidly growing dark; for it must not be forgotten there is no twilight in Italy, and the moon was not yet visible; so we had nothing to do but admire the fireflies which the midshipmen ruthlessly persisted in ensnaring in their caps and handkerchiefs, or laugh at the efforts of *l'officier marié*, as our friends had named the young lieutenant, to sustain a conversation in French. No fear of robbers crossed our minds; the consul and our countrymen were armed, it is true, but more as a security against danger in the vicinity of Loretto, than in the unfrequented districts we were traversing, where there were no travellers or wealthy householders to attract the gangs which swarmed on the papal highways.

At last, after the consul's lamentations on the weariness of the way began to find an echo in our own hearts, we emerged from a narrow path, shut in by steep banks, upon the *casino*. But it was not on its open doors, or the hospitable lights kindling for our reception, that our eyes were turned. I do not remember being ever so enchanted by any view as that now presented to us. I know not whether daylight would rob it of any portion of its beauty and soothing influence; I can only speak of it as it impressed me then—so calm, so pure, so still. We were standing on the verge of a lofty cliff that stretched precipitously forward like a crescent, and formed a bay on whose waters the moon, which had just risen, poured a flood of trembling silvery light; while on one side, dark, ominous, and frowning, rose the mount, projecting far into the sea, and towering in its sullen grandeur above the rippling waves which bore their snowy wreaths of foam in tribute to its feet. Clear and defined against the moonlit sky, with no trees or verdure to clothe its rocky steeps, there was something impressively sublime in the aspect of this mountain, and the lonely character of the surrounding scenery. No sound invaded the perfect quietude of the hour except the reverential murmur of the sea, and faintly in the distance, the voices of some fishermen, whose barks were gliding forth, their sails filling with the evening breeze, and glistening in the moonbeams.

The preparations for supper were soon completed. The peasants left in charge of the house had eggs, and fruit and wine in readiness, and Madame V—— had taken care that our donkey's panniers should contain all the substantial requisites for a repast. The midshipmen delightedly superintended the laying of the cloth, and then summoned us to table, where their bibations of the sparkling Muscatel profusely supplied, did credit to the excellence of our friend the *conte's* vintage.

When the meal was over, the old *contadina*, who officiated as housekeeper, her Sunday costume and strings of pearls donned in honour of our visit, recommended us to take a little sleep before midnight, at which hour we were to set out for the mount in *birocchi*—those primitive-shaped carts drawn by oxen or cows that I have elsewhere minutely described. This reasonable advice the consul forthwith enforced by example as well as precept, and was soon slumbering sonorously on a sofa in the dining-room. Not feeling inclined to follow his admonitions while the moonlight shone almost as bright as day, we all preferred exploring the *casino* and strolling in its vicinity, accompanied by the dear patient *consolessa*, who evidently did not think the *convenances* permitted her to lose sight of us, and consequently protested that she was not in the least fatigued.

The house was soon looked over. No arm-chairs, no couches, no ottomans; nothing but stiff high-backed cane sofas, that seemed intended for anything but repose. There was a billiard-room, and a little chapel, or rather recess, divided by a pair of folding-doors from the principal sitting-room, where mass was celebrated when the family were in the

country: but we could discover no books or traces of aught resembling a library. In fact, as I have before remarked, as most Italians consider reading a *study*, and have no idea of it as a recreation, all appliances thereto are generally left behind when they come professedly in search of health and mental relaxation to their *vileggiature*. From six weeks to two months is the utmost amount of time they devote for this purpose. What with looking after their farms and a little shooting, the men get through this period with tolerable satisfaction; to the ladies, it is always fraught with intense ennui.

The resources of floriculture with rare exceptions, are unknown to the women of the Marche. There was one lady of rank in Ancona who had laid out a garden at one of her country-houses with considerable taste. It was the only innovation I witnessed upon the orthodox quadrangular enclosure, fenced in by high walls with espaliers of lemons, and little three-cornered flower-beds, intersected by gravel-paths, which graced a few of the *casini* of the wealthiest proprietors. Her example, however, found no imitators; and with a soil and climate exquisitely adapted for their cultivation, flowers receive less attention and seem less prized in the Roman states than in any other part of Italy. Here, in this secluded villa, where the interest and occupation attendant on such a pursuit would have beguiled the weariness of the contessa's banishment from the fleas, bad smells, and stifling atmosphere which render Ancona, during the hottest months, a somewhat questionable Elysium, a small wood adjoining the house, a few rose-bushes planted round cabbages, and two or three cobwebby arbours, were all the evidences of ornamental gardening we could trace.

About midnight, we heard the slow dragging of wheels, and presently the peasants of the *possessione* came up with two birocci to the gate. Mattresses were then placed at the bottom of each, on which we were to sit; and after Madame V—— had carefully arranged the cloaks and shawls her prudent care foresaw would ere long be necessary, we took our places, and in good earnest commenced the ascent. Before long, the extraordinary and unnecessary steepness of the road became apparent. With a singular defiance of all engineering, it was carried abruptly up to the tops of hills, merely to descend with corresponding rapidity on the other side, reminding me more of the Russian sliding mountains than any other illustration I can think of, and occasionally becoming so disagreeably perpendicular, and so distressing to the poor cows, which panted loudly at every step, that we often preferred getting out to walk, to overtaking their strength and risking our own safety.

When the moon went down, the air became chill, and all of us gave tokens of weariness. As it approached three o'clock, our conductors, pointing to a faint break in the horizon, urged us to hasten our steps, as day would soon be dawning. Thus admonished, a few minutes of brisk walking brought us to the top of the mountain, which, so far as we could distinguish in the dull grayness pervading every object, was an irregular platform, on three sides overhanging the sea, and on the fourth commanding a wide dark boundless expanse, on which the blackness of night still rested. A little lower down, in a sheltered hollow, amid dusky groves of evergreen, cold, stern, and desolate, rose the white walls of the celebrated Trappist monastery. The strange tales current of the austerities of its inmates and of the disappointment or remorse which had driven them to its seclusion, seemed appropriate to the surrounding gloom and the spectral aspect of the building, when the tones of the matin-bell broke the oppressive silence that prevailed, and the *Ave Maria del giorno* summoned the monks to their orisons in the choir. Our guides, reverently

uncovering, made the sign of the cross, and then flung themselves wearily upon the ground, screened by a low parapet from the wind, which circled in keen gusts around; while we look forth upon the sea, and the glowing light that was stealing fast upon it.

Brighter and brighter grows that radiance, until, as by the lifting of a veil, the distant peaks of the mountains on the opposite Dalmatian shores become distinctly visible, thrown into bold relief by the illuminated background, and we span the breadth and borders of the beauteous Adriatic. Fleeting as a dream is that unwonted spectacle, for lo! the glorious sun has leaped upwards from his mountain-bed, and the glad waters quiver and exult beneath his presence. Higher and higher still he rises, and Night flies scared before him, as if seeking a refuge in that vague dim space where yet she holds her sway. It is a wondrous contrast, the golden sparkling sea, and sable land, nature's mingled waking and repose—but short-lived as wondrous, for like the gradual unrolling of a scroll, so does the darkness recede which covers the face of the fair and wide-spread prospect; and hamlets and towns, hills and valleys, fields thick with corn, olive trees and vineyards, seem to start into being while we gaze.

The peasants pointed out exultingly a number of towns distinguishable with the naked eye—Osimo, Loreto, Recanati, Macerata, besides many others, all with an individual history of their own, in feudal times having boasted an independent existence, and waged petty wars with each other. Nearly a hundred towns and villages are said to be discernible from this height; but it was not on any of these in particular that the attention of a stranger would be admirably directed, but rather to the grand panoramic effect of the whole, bounded by its unrivalled background of Apennines, rising in terrace-like succession, till the last range blended with the clouds.

After nearly an hour's survey—it was much longer according to the chevalier's impatient calculation, in which he was abetted by the midshipmen—we prepared to depart. After bidding farewell to our birocci, we descended upon the opposite side of the mount on foot, accompanied only by a boy to act as guide, and not without casting many lingering looks at the convent, and longing for a glimpse of those white-robed monks, who—each isolated in his own cell, and occupied in the cultivation of the patch of ground whence he derives his subsistence—holding no communion of speech without the permission of the superior, except on three great festivals in the year, and never permitted to go beyond the walls of the convent, have voluntarily delivered themselves to a foretaste of the silence and confinement of the tomb.

An hour's quick walking brought us to Umana, where carriages were to be in readiness to convey us across the country to Loreto. Formerly of some importance as an episcopal see, Umana is now reduced to a mere harbour for fishing-boats; still, however, containing some handsome though half-ruined buildings, and having its grass-grown piazza, dingy caffè, and aristocratic loungers. The bishopric has been merged in that of Ancona, but the palace yet remains, in readiness for an occasional pastoral visitation. We had been courteously promised we should find it open for our reception; and dusty, tired, and hungry, we were glad to cross its threshold. But before allowing us to sit down, the old couple who had charge of the *palazzo* insisted on conducting us through all the apartments, that we might see the best accommodation they had to offer was placed at our disposal. Accordingly, we were forced to perambulate long corridors and innumerable rooms full of doors, opening one into the other, through which it seemed vain to search for one that was not simply

a passage to the rest. The brick floors were sunken and uneven; and the furniture, which consisted of tarnished mirrors, high-backed stamped-leather chairs, carved worm-eaten tables, with discoloured gilding, all looked faded and decaying. The beds, with their heavy brocaded quilts, canopies, and hangings, did not look particularly inviting; but in the total absence of sofas, they served for an hour or two of repose: after which, refreshed by such ablutions as the scanty washing arrangements permitted—nothing beyond the usual tripod containing a small basin and jug being allotted to each chamber, or procurable throughout the whole palace—we assembled for breakfast. Here one of the middies narrowly missed upsetting the general harmony by relating his fruitless attempts to obtain a tub, winding up his narrative by the remark, 'that these padros must be a queer set, decidedly not hydropathic.' This observation being unfortunately overheard by the chevalier, who perfectly understood English, was immediately interpreted into a want of reverence for the priesthood. Turning very red, he said with emphasis: 'It was extremely unfair and narrow-minded to cast that as an imputation upon one class of the community, which was decidedly a national characteristic;' and an awkward pause ensuing, we should all have felt very uncomfortable, if the entrance of several *bottegas*, waiters from the caffè, bearing a number of little brass trays containing each person's cup, tiny coffee-pot, milk-jug, and allowance of powdered sugar, had not given a happy turn to the state of affairs. The price of this collation, including a liberal supply of rolls and cakes, did not exceed five *bagocchi* a head (twopence-halfpenny). More substantial fare was supplied by the remaining contents of the basket that had furnished last night's supper; and being now completely recruited, we all sallied out to see something of Umans.

Our appearance on the piazza created an immense sensation. It was evident the presence of strangers was no common occurrence to the industrious citizens pursuing there the *dolce far niente*. Then, too, in addition to the flattering notice of the outdoor population—the barber, the apothecary, the keeper of the lottery-office, the tobacconist, besides whoever happened to be making *conversazioni* with them at the moment, all stood at their respective doors to look at us, and bowed with flattering urbanity. This tranquil demonstration, however, was soon eclipsed by an inroad of beggars, who had at first presented themselves in limited detachments; but as nothing could restrain our sailor-friends from distributing small coins in profusion, their numbers soon became astounding, and we ran the risk of being pulled to pieces in their eagerness, or deafened by their clamour. At this juncture, the consul and the three delinquents, forming themselves into a body-guard, faced round and menaced the most importunate with their sticks, while we availed ourselves of the opportunity to escape further pursuit, and laughingly descended a steep stony path leading to the beach.

Here some fishermen at once gathered round, and assailed us with inquiries as to whether we would not like to see the famous Grotta de' Schiavi, distant half an hour's row along the coast. This had not formed part of our projected itinerary; but the sea being exquisitely calm, and the weather delightful, the majority of the party were strongly inclined to follow the suggestion. While the point was still in discussion, an unexpected ally in surmounting the opposing side presented himself in the *Chiarissimo* and *Dottissimo* *Signor Dottore* — (most enlightened and most gifted, thus he would be styled officially), the most popular physician in Ancona, and an especial favourite in my uncle's household. Summoned the previous night to Umans for a consultation, he had promised to remain till evening to await the result of the treatment he

enjoined, and not being a frequenter of caffès, was now beguiling the time by a stroll on the sea-shore.

Assuring the consolessa, who had a vision of banditti before her eyes, that even a delay of two hours would not hinder our reaching Loretto before sunset, and offering his escort in lieu of Monsieur V——, whose politeness was combated by his dislike to any marine expeditions, we soon obtained the good pair's acquiescence. The consul went back to the episcopal palace to take a second nap; his spouse, faithful to her duties, cheerfully prepared to accompany us, too amiable to give herself the satisfaction of looking victimised. Two boats were soon selected from a host of applicants, who remained furiously wrangling among themselves, and hurling imprecations at the head of their successful comrades, long after we had pushed out to sea.

Although the men pulled vigorously, rather more than the stipulated time elapsed before we decried a dark speck at the base of the white cliffs which rose, without a strip of intervening shingle, abruptly from the water's edge. As we approached, this proved to be an aperture wide enough to admit the entrance of a boat, and crouching as we glided under the low, dark passage, we found ourselves in a lofty circular cavern, with no place for the foot to rest upon except a narrow ledge of rock, two or three feet wide, that ran around it. A mournful interest, derived from well-authenticated facts, is attached to the Grotta de' Schiavi—that is, of the Slaves—to which its name especially bears reference. It was here, as the sailors told us, and the dottore confirmed, that in those times when the Adriatic coast was ruthlessly swept by the Algerine corsairs, they used temporarily to confine their prisoners, and deposit the booty they had collected. Landing them upon the narrow ledge within the grotto, they would leave them securely bound while they went in quest of further plunder, confident that no means of egress, or possibility of rescue, lay before the wretched victims they had torn from their homes and kindred.

This scene gave rise to an animated conversation, in the course of which the physician drew a parallel between the Christian slaves and the political victims still crowding the dungeons of Italy.

It was a sombre picture—yet the bright sunshine, the sparkling waters, the ineffable beauty of the cloudless sky, as we emerged from the grotto, were irresistible spells to counteract any feeling of dejection.

Duly drawn up on the piazza, we found, on regaining the shore, the two *retture* previously bespoken, surpassing specimens of that delectable style of equipage—each with three spectral horses, whose mean bodily appearance was supposed to be atoned for by an extra supply of glingling bells and scarlet worsted tufts; the drivers, fierce and bravo-like; and the interiors painfully redolent of musty straw. There were six places in each, two in the *cabriolet*, and four inside; and the consul and Madame V—— respectively taking the command of a division, with many expressions of thanks and good-will to the dottore, whose presence had formed a very agreeable interlude to some amongst the party, we set forth in great style. The whole mendicant population, at least half apparently of the inhabitants of Umans, escorted us, like a guard of honour, as a tribute to the largesses of our good-humoured tars, and filled the air with their benedictions; while a number of boys and girls, even after the horses had been urged into a feeble trot, pursued us indefatigably for at least a mile, the former making wheels of themselves, and bowling along after the most approved fashion; and the latter springing up to the windows to offer their bunches of flowers, and obtain a farewell token of English liberality.

After a drive of four hours or thereabouts, through country equally fertile and diversified, we drew near

Loretto, situated on the brow of a very steep hill, crowned by the church of the Santa Casa. As we wound slowly up the ascent, we met the peasants in large numbers returning from some neighbouring fair, and were struck by the scowling looks with which they eyed us, and a general air of menace and defiance. Singularly enough, it is notorious that the population in the vicinity of this venerated shrine is the worst throughout the whole pontifical dominions. This is a perplexing fact to persons who, like the V—— family, were perfectly sincere in their belief of the legend of the holy house's miraculous transportation by angels from Nazareth; and who naturally would infer that the immediate presence of such a relic ought to have produced a salutary effect upon public morals. Their explanation of this inconsistency was briefly, that the town having been for centuries the resort of pilgrims of all ranks and from every clime, the Loretani had become corrupted by ever-changing intercourse with these strangers: an hypothesis we unquestioningly accepted, for it must not be forgotten we were now on delicate ground, and many an observation that might have jarred on our foreign companions, had to be altogether suppressed or carefully kept amongst ourselves. The sinister aspects of the groups we encountered gave a clue to the numerous robberies perpetrated in the neighbourhood; to say nothing of the darker tales of murder and revenge, of which the way-side crosses, so frequent during the last few miles, were ominously suggestive.

Equally unfavourable were our first impressions of the town, as we drove through a narrow street, lined on each side with booths, where every description of medals, chaplets, rosaries, and other objects of devotion lay exposed for sale, which we were loudly called upon to purchase. Slipshod women, their black hair escaping, matted and disordered, from the coloured handkerchiefs bound about their heads; beggars, in every stage and form of human misery—blind, palsied, maimed; squalid children; lean, fighting dogs; portly priests; dirty pilgrims with staff and scallop-shell: such is the appearance of the crowd that greets the traveller on entering Loretto.

On reaching the inn, we found a fresh assemblage of mendicants drawn up in array in the courtyard; objects so dirty and revolting, that one involuntarily shrunk from contact with them; and clamorous, even peremptory, in their demands, which are in general liberally complied with. Their trade is supposed to be a thriving one, since the majority of persons repairing to the town, do so from religious motives, and esteem this promiscuous alms-giving a stringent duty. Besides these, we encountered upon the unswept stairs several women with baskets of rosaries and medals, which they kept importuning us to buy, that we might have them blessed at the Santa Casa; and lastly, two or three tottering old men waylaid us on the landing, and pressingly offered themselves as our *ciceroni* to the shrine. But it was too late, or rather we were too weary for any more sight-seeing that day; and as soon as dinner was concluded, we were glad enough to betake ourselves to repose.

KIRKE WEBBE,

THE PRIVATEER CAPTAIN.

CHAPTER XIX.

I MAY not deny that with the commanding officer's words a great fear fell upon me, although pride—Maria Wilson being present—enabled me to assume an air of defiance, which no doubt favourably contrasted with the demeanour of my fellow-prisoners. Jacques Sicard's suspended breath burst forth in a torrent of wordy, ignoble rage, bespattering his captors, the court-martial, and all others directly or indirectly

concerned in the infamous conspiracy against him with volleys of unflattering epithets, till silenced by '*Tais-toi, cochon!*' emphasised by a sharp blow on his mouth with the hilt of the officer's sword; whilst Harry Webbe, whose face had blanched to the hue of death, and whose knees smote each other at the bare appearance of the soldiers, presently gave unresisted way to the mortal terror which he had vainly struggled to master, and sinking down with a cry of horror at Captain Lenoir's feet, abjectly clasped them in the delirium of fear which deprived him of all self-respect and control.

'Get up, miserable coward!' exclaimed the officer, spurning the wretched suppliant with his booted foot.

My blood flamed at the humiliating sight, and casting off the hold of the soldier to whose more immediate custody I had been consigned, I darted forward, lifted young Webbe by main strength upon his feet, and retorted upon Lenoir with:

'It is you who in perfect safety insult a young man whom a— a sudden surprise has overcome for the moment, that are a miserable coward! Courage, Webbe!' I added, vainly the while striving to make him stand upon his feet. 'Courage!—a Frenchman's bark is a much grander thing than his bite at all times; and so it will prove in this case. The bullets that will kill you and me are not cast yet, take my word for it.'

Let not the reader suppose that this was a very daring act on my part. I must have felt, without reasoning upon it, that nothing I could say would in legal parlance damnify my actual position in the slightest degree. I was, besides, greatly irritated by Lenoir's brutal conduct towards Sicard as well as Harry Webbe; and then Maria Wilson, to say nothing of Clémence, was looking on.

Captain Lenoir stared at me with rather an expression of amused surprise than of anger. 'You crow well for so young a cock,' said he. 'We shall presently see whether it is true or false fire that gives life to such bold words. As to this poor devil,' he continued, 'there must be, I think, some mistake, for he cannot surely be the young desperado denounced by Monsieur Auguste Le Moine. If he were'—

'No—no—no; I am not he!' screamed the wretched youth. 'It was not I that slew Captain Le Moine: I was below in the cabin, and took no part in the fight—no part whatever, I swear to you.'

'Still your name is Webbe; and it was he that'—

'No—no; it is a horrible misapprehension! This is he,' added the fear-frenzied young man, turning fiercely upon me—'this is he who on that dreadful night led the boarders of the *Scout*. Speak, Linwood: deny, if you can, or dare, that it was at your hand Captain Le Moine met his death; that it was you whom Auguste Le Moine denounced at Avranches'—

His eye suddenly encountered Miss Wilson's, and instantly checked in his passionate appeal to me, he cast himself at her feet, and with sobbing agony exclaimed: 'Ah, God! I am ruined—undone—lost!'

'On the contrary, you are, I think, saved,' remarked the officer, 'if what you say is true; and your friend does not, it seems, challenge its truth.'

'It would be folly to do so, now that'—

'Enough! enough!' interrupted Lenoir. 'You are not compelled to criminate yourself. It is a pity, besides, that a brave lad should perish to save the life of a wretched cur that— But time presses. Fall in, if you please. And I advise you, Monsieur Webbe, to recover the use of your legs without delay. Quick—quick! It is only ladies, be pleased to remember, that are privileged to faint,' he added with a glance at Maria Wilson, who had swooned in Madame Dupre's arms. 'If you do, the remedy we shall use will be the sharp point of a bayonet liberally applied. Oh, you can walk, I see. Adieu, mesdames. March!'

Thus suddenly collapsed Mr Harry Webbe's fighting reputation, destroyed by himself in the very insanity of terror, since a moment's cool reflection would have shewn him that if the military authorities of Havre were determined to be revenged upon Webbe, the privateer captain—and that, I felt, must be their chiefly actuating motive, as well as Mr Tyler's—by the legal murder of his son, the violation of parole would be quite sufficient excuse for such a deed. I sincerely pitied the unfortunate young man, whose timidity was, there could be no doubt, constitutional, impressed upon his being by the circumstances attending his birth, and uncontrollable by any effort of his will; and now, should he escape the menaced doom by court-martial, the grace and ornament of life were gone for ever. Maria Wilson, he must have read as plainly as I did in her look and gesture of astonishment, indignation, contempt, as she freed the skirts of her dress from his trembling grasp, was irrevocably lost, and what more afflictive stroke than that could fate have in reserve for him!

And if lost to him, might she not be won by me in the bright future which, upborne by Love's light wings into the airy regions of romance, and loftily overlooking with youthful Hope's bold, creative eyes, the cloudy screen of present doubts and fears, was, I fancied, already flushing the horizon with rising, rosiest light! Assuredly I might win her; and that thought glowed within my heart, inflamed my blood with fire from heaven!

Some gleams of that transcendental illumination of mind must have been reflected upon my features, for Father Meudon, who entered the prison in a state of extreme agitation, whilst we were halted for a few minutes in the fore court-yard, was struck with astonishment by my aspect and bearing.

'How is this?' he exclaimed: 'you look as if you were going to be crowned in the Capitol, instead of being dragged forth to suffer a violent, untimely death!'

The strength and sincerity of the good priest's apprehensions rudely dissipated the volatile fancies which uplifted and sustained me in the region of dream-land, and I fell at once to the hard, commonplace, matter-of-fact earth again.

'I cannot bring myself to believe, I have not been able to realise the possibility,' said I, 'that the members of the court-martial before which we are about to appear, will dare to carry out the ferocious purpose you impute to them.'

'Dare! not dare!' echoed M. Meudon. 'Have I not explained to you over and over again that there is no daring in the case; that the will of the general in command is the law during a state of siege, and Havre has been in a legal state of siege for several weeks past, though the military régime has not been rigorously enforced? A few hours' delay,' added the reverend father, 'might have saved you; for there is now no doubt that the restored government will supersede General Vêray; and that too, it is expected, by my friend Colonel Durand. Alas! the official mandate will arrive too late.'

The reappearance of Captain Lenoir, who had been giving a written receipt for his prisoners, was the signal to proceed: the heavy, sullen gates were thrown open, and the next minute we were in the midst of a hooting, yelling mob, all of whom, whether Bourbonist or Bonapartist, were unanimously in favour of shooting or hanging the two English pirates, as they were pleased to designate Harry Webbe and me. The soldiers effectively protected us, however, from the physical assaults of the crowd, and their merely verbal attacks were easily borne. One paramount, well-established fact, Messieurs Mob were determined we should be fully impressed with—that our execution, namely, had been already settled to take place on the

North Rampart, at four o'clock precisely, it then being a few minutes past three.

'The scoffs and curses of the canaille,' said Father Meudon, who walked close beside me, 'are fortunately much less formidable than offensive, and I am not without hope—a faint one, I grieve to say—that their brutal wishes may yet be balked.'

'Is my mother,' I asked, 'cognizant of the gravity of my position?'

'Not as yet. She believes you to be simply accused of the minor offence of making use of false papers. It will, however, be impossible to conceal long the dread truth from her, now that savage denunciations of the English spies and pirates are resounding on all sides. Le Capitaine Webbe,' added Father Meudon, in a voice subdued to a whisper, 'has, I hear, fled from Havre: there is no hope of aid, therefore, from that quarter. But what could he have done to help us had he remained? Nothing, after all!'

The court-martial was to assemble in the Hôtel de Ville; and as Father Meudon was speaking, we turned out of the Rue de Paris into the flower and vegetable market, where the crowd was so dense that it was with difficulty our escort hurtled slow way through it. Suddenly, there was such extreme pressure upon us that the line of march was broken in the rear of where I walked; and the soldiers and prisoners were for a minute or two mixed up with the mob. I looked back, and saw a man wearing a blouse and a flapping broad-brimmed black straw-hat, which completely shadowed, and, except to a very near observer, concealed his features. He had viciously assaulted Harry Webbe, whose coat was nearly rent off his back in the struggle; and it was with difficulty the soldiers rescued their prisoner from the man's ferocious clutch. As I gazed, the broad, shadowing hat was slightly pushed aside, and I saw that the furious assailant was no other than Captain Kirke Webbe himself!

He had achieved his purpose of secretly thrusting a scrap of paper into his son's hand, which, when we had reached the Hall of Justice, Harry Webbe glanced at, and then passed to me. It contained these words: 'Be bold—fearless; deny nothing—confess nothing: I will save you yet.'

The caution had come too late with reference to the confession which Captain Webbe was chiefly anxious to prevent his son from making, and as for the promise to shield that son from the sentence of the court-martial, I could not, with all my superstitious faith in the privateer captain's genius for bold expedients and calculated daring, place the slightest dependence thereon. Force was hopelessly out of the question, and what could the subtlest cunning devise to arrest a doom which would be carried into effect immediately after it was pronounced? His father's positive assurance had, however, a vivifying influence upon Harry Webbe. A faint colour stole doubtfully back to his white cheeks, his drooping frame grew erect again, and his downcast eyes confronted the grim array which was presently before us with a trembling hope, a shrinking boldness as it were.

When we were marched into the Salle, two or three inferior officials only were present; but the public having been, after some demur, it seemed, admitted, the Salle was in a few minutes densely packed with excited spectators. Their impatience was not irritated by delay. Cries of 'Silence!—silence!' by the huissiers, preceded the entrance of General Vêray, Colonel Durand, and three officers of inferior rank, who took their places in stern silence at a baize-covered table, before which Harry Webbe, Jacques Sicard, and I had been ranged in line with a hedge of glittering bayonets immediately behind us.

General Vêray was a fine, soldierly-looking, gray-haired veteran; in the strong lines of whose war-and-age moulded features not a trace of human weakness

or indecision could be seen. Colonel Durand's handsome face wore a kindly expression, strikingly in contrast with the iron sternness of the general's; and the other members of the court-martial did not interest me much, thoroughly aware as I was that the fiat of the majority is conclusive of the decision of such courts, so called. I shall pass briefly over the formalities observed at that mockery of a judicial trial. We, the prisoners, were sternly questioned, and made to convict ourselves either by positive admissions or by refusals to answer, which were held to be tantamount to admissions of guilt. Harry Webbe, whose frenzied fit of terror had returned upon him, could not, for example, deny that he had given his *parole d'honneur* not to leave Havre, and that he had violated that pledge by escaping to Honfleur, with the intention of passing over to Jersey—a fact which was wrung from Sicard. Colonel Durand ventured to suggest that the prisoner was *gardé à vue*, which greatly mitigated his offence; and that it was besides extremely probable that he had been coerced into breaking his parole by his father, the notorious Captain Webbe, who, it had been ascertained, was the Baptiste spoken of by the gendarmes as the originator of, and chief actor in the riot at the cabaret.

'That is certainly possible,' remarked General Véra; 'but that audacious corsair not being before us, we must deal with those that are. It was not, at all events,' he added, with a look and voice of thunder, 'Webbe, father, who, a few days after a combat with a vessel of the imperial navy, presented himself at Avranches, a garrison-town, in the character of a citizen of the United States of America.'

Harry Webbe's wild denial of that part of the informal charge was confirmed by M. Auguste Le Moine himself, who I had understood was safe in Paris. He stepped forward, and assured the general-president that, if the prisoner who had broken his parole was Webbe the corsair-captain's son, he certainly was not the individual whom he, Le Moine, had detected and denounced at Avranches.

'That person is, however, before the tribunal: there is the young man,' he added, pointing to me, 'by whose hand my uncle fell, in perfectly honourable combat, I admit, and who, a few days afterwards—seduced, corrupted, no doubt, by the execrable English government—accepted the well-paid infamy, and will, I cannot doubt, receive from this tribunal the reward of a traitorous spy.'

A grim assenting smile flitted over the general's cast-iron countenance, and an approving murmur ran through the vengeful auditory. All eyes were now turned from Harry Webbe upon me; and the president, honouring me with a stern, stony gaze, demanded if I admitted the facts stated by M. Le Moine.

'I admit, Monsieur le President, that I had the misfortune to deprive, in accordance with the usages of war, Captain Le Moine of his life; and that at a banquet at Avranches, I committed the folly of permitting it to appear that I was an American; but I deny, with all the indignation which so dishonouring a charge excites in the breast of an honest man, that I was in France for any hostile or unworthy purpose.'

'You will not deny that you assumed various disguises in France, and passed under at least two different names. In St Malo, you called yourself Jean Le Gros, and were confederate with Jacques Le Gros, pretendingly your uncle, and really the corsair Captain Webbe.'

Mr Tyler, whom I had not before noticed, rose in a tribune at the right-hand upper end of the hall, and begged to state that he did not believe I was in the slightest degree cognizant of Webbe senior's infamous schemes; and that he, Tyler, had seen me without any disguise in St Malo—wearing, in fact, the very clothes I then had on.

'We are nevertheless informed,' said the subaltern officer who acted as secretary, after translating what Mr Tyler said—'we are nevertheless informed that William Linwood, whilst residing in St Malo, was disguised as a French peasant of the proprietary class.'

'That may be,' said Mr Tyler; 'but I repeat that I saw him on the very day I left St Malo in the dress he now wears.'

'Although,' persisted the secretary—'although you do not believe that the prisoner, William Linwood, was confederate with Jacques Le Gros, otherwise the corsair Captain Webbe, it is certain that he was on board the *Scout* when temporary possession was obtained of your ship, the *Columbia*. It is also well established,' added the officer, addressing the general-president, 'that William Linwood was one of the party at La Belle Poule cabaret, on the evening of the riot and rescue of his now fellow-prisoner.'

'Enough—more than enough!' exclaimed General Véra. 'The facts are too plain to require either comment or interpretation. Who,' he added, fiercely addressing me—'who furnished you with the passport of Adolphe, Louis Piron, by aid of which you for a time baffled justice?'

I did not answer, and Sicard was asked if he had not furnished me with the said Adolphe, Louis Piron's passport. The reluctant reply was a hesitating admission of the fact, followed by a vehement denial that he either then or now suspected or believed me to be a spy, or in any respect the enemy of France.

There were but few more questions asked, and the court were about to withdraw, not to deliberate upon our guilt and doom, but to formalise their decrees, when Father Meudon rose and requested that I might at least be allowed to give my own version of the motives and purposes of my visit to France. That very reasonable request was peremptorily refused. A statement which could not be verified, the general replied, would not refute or modify well-established facts.

The members of the court-martial then retired, and a buzz of animated conversation succeeded to the strict silence which had been imposed upon the crowded auditory. The conclusions that had been arrived at by nine-tenths of the spectators were freely bandied about, generally accompanied by a jest or sneer—in a few instances only by an expression of pity. It was decided that I, at all events, would be shot at the breaking up of the court, and at the open space near the North Barrier I heard a sous-officer say, in reply to a question from an acquaintance. Opinions seemed to be divided with respect to the fate of Harry Webbe; and Sicard was quite forgotten in the eager discussion of the two Englishmen's chances of life and death.

Strange to say, neither the quite openly manifested determination of the members of the court-martial—Colonel Durand excepted—to condemn me to death, the confident opinions I heard expressed on all sides that my fate was sealed, nor the cold, trembling pressure of Father Meudon's hands enfolding mine, whilst tears streamed down his pale face, brought home to me that the strong life dancing in my veins was upon the verge of extinction. The day was bright and genial; the fresh breeze, admitted through the wide, open windows of the Hall, brought with it the odour of flowers, the merry voices of market-girls, the laughter of children, and in the distance, a military band was playing lively melodies. The common air was vocal with busy, lusty life, and refused, as it were, to entertain the idea of death—of black, dumb death, and especially of death by murderous violence! No question that this was a very illogical impression of mine; still, I felt it strongly, and it was not sensibly weakened till the door through which the court had passed was again flung wide upon its noiseless

hinges, and the arbiters of fate stalked slowly to their places. The look of mournful compassion with which Colonel Durand regarded me, more startlingly impressed me than the stern visages of General V éray and his servile subordinates; and I suddenly awoke from a vain dream of security to find myself upon the edge of a precipice, at the bottom of which yawned a newly dug grave!—My breath came thick and short; a dizziness seized me, and for a few moments I feared that I should disgrace my name and race by a degrading, and useless as degrading, exhibition of womanly weakness. By a great effort, I fortunately managed to keep up an appearance of unruffled, defiant composure, which powerfully excited the sympathy of Colonel Durand, and drew from General V éray a curt expression of regret that so bold a youth had rendered himself justly liable to a shameful death.

The reader will understand that all this while Harry Webbe was prostrated with abject terror; and I mention this the less reluctantly, that it throws into high relief—gives, in fact, the only moral value to the firmness he subsequently displayed, since what in him required an almost superhuman effort, would, to a son of ordinary nerve, have been a matter of course.

The command of the huissiers to keep silence was superfluous. The auditory held their breath that they might not lose a syllable of the tragedy of real life acted before their eyes.

Jacques Sicard, bourgeois and bottier of St Malo, was convicted and condemned to one year's imprisonment. This was the first judgment pronounced; and although it excited the liveliest indignation on the convict's part, the spectators seemed to be merely annoyed that it should have been permitted to delay the more exciting announcements for which they impatiently listened.

'William Linwood,' continued the military secretary as soon as Sicard's indignant remonstrances had been silenced—'William Linwood, a British subject, convicted of having entered two garrison towns of France as a spy; of being confederate, whilst there, with the notorious English corsair Webbe, and of having planned with him attacks upon his imperial majesty's allies, the United States of America; convicted, moreover, of having conspired with the said Webbe to enable his son, Harry Webbe, to violate his *parole d'honneur*—is, by a plurality of voices, condemned to be shot; two hours' respite being allowed, that he may avail himself, if so disposed, of the services of a minister of religion.'

A piercing, convulsive scream, which I too well recognised, broke in upon the last phrases of the infamous sentence. A sword passing through me would not have inflicted a sharper pang, and I leant for support upon weeping Father Meudon. 'I will go to thy mother,' he said, 'but presently return. Be comforted: thou art nearer Heaven than any here—nearer than thy cruel judges will ever be.'

'Harry Webbe, British subject,' proceeded the unmoved secretary, 'convicted of having broken his parole, and of being confederate with his father, Kirke Webbe, in piratical attacks upon his imperial majesty's allies, the United States of America, is condemned to be shot'—

'Mercy! Mercy!' shrieked the poor fellow; and he continued to pour forth such a torrent of wild supplication for pity, mercy—that it was some time before the general could make himself heard and understood, to the effect that the sentence of death would be remitted upon his, Harry Webbe's acceptance and fulfilment of a precedent condition to be named by the court.

'Anything—any condition, I will accept—fulfil,' gasped the prisoner.

'I believe that,' said General V éray, 'though that which I am about to propose is one which, but that

the public weal requires it, I would not suggest, even to such a contemptible caiff as thou art. Listen: You are definitively doomed to be shot, and that sentence will be carried out within, at the latest, two hours from now, unless you are willing and able to ransom your life by—by— Read the condition insisted upon, Lieutenant Rogier.'

'The sentence of death passed upon Harry Webbe, a British subject,' said Lieutenant Rogier, reading from a paper, 'will be remitted, if the said prisoner can and will enable justice to lay hold of the corsair Captain Webbe, who is known to be either in Havre or the neighbourhood.'

A cry of horror arose from the auditory as the atrocious proposal left the lips of the military secretary, and it was some minutes before silence could be restored. As for the son, he gazed aghast, speechless, upon his tempters with an expression which no words could interpret.

'Silence!' thundered General V éray, 'or the hall shall be forthwith cleared. The proposal you have just heard,' he continued, addressing Harry Webbe, 'is dictated by a stern sense of public duty. The corsair-captain was the concocter of the traitorous conspiracies that have brought you, and what is much more to be regretted, the young man at your side, to the brink of an untimely grave. You are now offered a chance of avoiding that death. Which, then, do you choose—life or death?'

'You cannot mean this,' gasped young Webbe; 'you are men, not fiends in human form!'

'We are desirous of bringing a notorious malefactor to justice. You can aid us to do so; and by so doing, save your own life. What, once for all, do you say?'

'I cannot—dare not—will not!'

'Enough!' interrupted the general; 'your blood be upon your own head. The court is adjourned. Captain Lenoir, remove your prisoners.'

'One moment—hear me but for one moment!' screamed Harry Webbe.

'Do you accept the condition offered you?' sternly broke in the general. 'Yes—or no?'

'No—no—a thousand times no!' shouted the young man with the courage and energy of despair; 'I will die first.'

'The answer does you honour, and seals your doom,' said the general. 'Let the prisoners be removed at once.'

'I have a question to ask of Monsieur le Général,' said Father Meudon, pressing forward to the front of the tribunal. 'Does he pledge his word that if the corsair-captain, Kirke Webbe, is surrendered into the custody of this tribunal, the life of the prisoner, Harry Webbe, will be spared?'

'I pledge my word of honour to that effect. The corsair-captain once in our power, his son shall be immediately liberated.'

'I accept that pledge,' said a man, stepping briskly up. 'I am Kirke Webbe, the corsair-captain!'

FOUNDED ON FAITH.

In the neighbourhood of Bristol there exists an institution but little known to the general public, yet of such a singular nature that it may fairly be classed amongst the wonders of the age. It is situated at Ashley Down, one of the most beautiful suburbs of the city, and is simply and unobtrusively named 'The New Orphan Asylum.' Within its walls, 300 fatherless children, aged from a few months upwards, are fed, clothed, and taught. The elder girls are instructed in sewing and all domestic arts, and at a proper age are each provided with an outfit and a suitable situation; the boys are similarly fitted out, and apprenticed; and all this is done without any regular funds or subscribers, by a man who neither does now, nor ever

did, possess any property, or pecuniary means. Nor has a single shilling ever been solicited for its support, for the New Orphan Asylum is *founded on faith*.

This statement will probably raise a smile of incredulity; but it is, nevertheless, a fact which cannot be gainsaid. There is the extensive range of buildings, in substantial stones and mortar; there, too, are 300 living witnesses, the recipients of its bounty and protection. On every Wednesday, the doors are open to all who choose to inspect for themselves this monument of love and charity. Enter: in this stern, practical, matter-of-fact nineteenth century, it is refreshing to halt for a moment on such a verdant oasis. There is no charge for admission; neither are the attendants permitted to receive any fees; but in the entrance-hall is a small box labelled, 'For the Use of the Orphans;' and if you think fit to drop a coin therein, you may do so. Visitors are shewn the dormitories, each little bed with its snowy coverlet; the wardrobes, fitted up with presses, wherein every child deposits his or her Sunday clothing with admirable precision of folding and arrangement; the nursery, and its tiny inmates, their basins and toys; and the dining-room, so large and lofty, and well ventilated, that it must be a pleasure to eat therein. Then there are the schools, three in number—the girls', the boys', and the infants—all of whom go through their exercises and sing their simple melodies, wearing, withal, a healthy, hearty, and happy expression, which speaks volumes for the system under which they are trained. Passing on, we visit the 'cutting-out' and 'making-up' rooms, the bakery, the dairy, the kitchens, the laundry, the bath-rooms—all well arranged, and indeed perfect in their appointments. Another range of offices is devoted to various store-rooms. There are stores of flour, of bread, of meat, of rice, of oatmeal—good Scotch meal, which forms the staple of the children's breakfast. There are stores of shoes, of clothing, of soap, of linen, of crockery, and even of toys for the delectation of the younger ones. The staff of teachers, nurses, and servants is large and efficient; the mental and physical wants of the children are amply provided for, and their comfort most sedulously studied; and all this, as many well know, has been brought into existence literally out of nothing. Doubt it not. Were you as incredulous as Thomas of Didymus, yet must the evidence of your senses convince you of the reality of this extraordinary fact. Seek not to explain it away, for the truth of the history attached to that asylum is incontrovertibly established.

That history is to be read in a little book, entitled *A Narrative of some of the Lord's Dealings with George Muller**—a quaint, strange title, which, of itself, seems to remove us far from the world of steam, and gas, and electric telegraphs. It is written in a simple style, wherein is no seeking after effect or ornament, and consists principally of extracts from the author's diary. I much fear, that in giving the substance of this narrative, I shall be unable to render it due justice; but my limited space forbids expansion. Here it is:

George Muller's creed is so unsectarian, that I have never yet been able to ascertain its precise nature; he, indeed, distinctly states that he does not belong to any sect, and his writings, no less than his deeds, confirm the assertion. He is a Prussian by birth, and emigrated, in 1829, to England, where, to quote from the narrative, he 'began the service of caring for children who are bereaved of both parents by death, born in wedlock, and are in destitute circumstances, on December 9, 1835.' For ten years he carried on his work of love in Wilson Street, first renting a single house for the use of his protégés. As their number increased, other premises became necessary;

till in 1845, four contiguous houses were occupied by about 130 children.

The expense of supporting these establishments was entirely defrayed by unsolicited contributions. Upon this principle they were started, and even when sorely pressed, it was rigidly adhered to. A perusal of the author's journal shews that he was often reduced to great extremities, from which he was always relieved in what will no doubt be deemed an unaccountable manner. Thus, under date August 10, 1844, is the following passage:

'In the greatest need, when not one penny was in hand, I received L.5 from a brother at Hackney.'

And again:

'Aug. 16, 1845. Our poverty is extremely great. The trial of faith as sharp as ever, or sharper. It is ten o'clock, and there are no means yet for a dinner. I now thought of some articles which I should be able to do without, to dispose of them for the benefit of the orphans, when one of the labourers (teachers) gave me L.1. There were also taken out of the boxes in the orphan houses 1s. 6d., and by knitting came in 2s. 3d., and from A. A., 2s.'

Such passages as these are of continual recurrence. Frequently, the last crust of bread, and sip of milk, was consumed, and Muller never contracted debts. Over and over again, the daily record commences with, 'Not a penny in hand!' and ends with, 'Only a few pence left;' and there was no treasure to draw upon, save the inexhaustible fund of faith—a fund which indeed appears to have fully answered every demand upon it, for the wants of the day were always fully supplied.

But the great work was yet to come. In 1845, Muller first began to conceive the idea of building an asylum for the accommodation of 300 orphans, and having fully considered the undertaking, 'I judged,' he says, 'that the cost would be L.10,000; and on November 4, I began asking the Lord for means.' Strangely enough, on the following 10th December, L.1000 came to hand. This was the largest donation which, up to that time, had ever been received; 'but when this money came,' he writes, 'I was as calm, as quiet as if I had only received one shilling; for my heart was looking out for answers. Therefore, having faith concerning the matter, this donation did not in the least surprise me.' Other donations followed, including a second sum of L.1000 on the 30th of December; and then he relates how he, 'having asked the Lord to go before him, went out to look for a piece of ground' whereon to build.

Here is a picture of startling sublimity! Imagine a gaunt, grave man, attired in a suit of rusty black, walking forth into the bustling city, like the pilgrims in Vanity Fair, and in all simplicity of heart, and earnestness of faith, seeking to be so directed to a suitable site. One almost expects to read on the next page, how that 'one of shining countenance appeared unto him, and bade him be of good cheer.'

It is not my intention to follow George Muller throughout the gradual process by which he effected his purpose; suffice it to say that, by little and little, the necessary funds flowed in. The building, which, with the land, cost eventually upwards of L.15,000, was commenced in July 1847; and in June 1849, the children were removed from Wilson Street to the healthier locality of Ashley Down. No flourish of trumpets ushered in the event; quietly and unostentatiously the children and their more than father walked from the one house to the other; and save that the old school-rooms were closed, whilst merry voices awoke the unwonted echoes of the Down, no change was perceptible.

Little more than twelve months elapsed ere Muller began to contemplate an extension of his work; and undeterred by the absence of visible means, the

* Nisbet & Co. London: 1836.

frequency of pecuniary difficulties, or the magnitude of the undertaking, he determined to build another wing, capable of receiving other 400 orphans, with a view to the ultimate extension of this additional number to 700, or 1000 in the whole. The first donation received for this purpose was ten shillings! But, nothing discouraged, he persevered; and in May 1853, the building fund amounted to L.3530, 9s. 0½d. The next year this amount had increased to L.12,531. In 1854, upwards of L.5000 was added to the fund; and in 1855, the sum in hand being L.23,059, 12s. 0½d.—always the odd farthing—the new building was commenced, and is, at this present writing, on the point of being opened for the reception of the forlorn little beings for whose benefit it is designed. Whether the benevolent founder will be enabled to complete his self-imposed task, by the construction of the intended third building, time alone can determine. Let us hope so.

Muller seems to have been incited to his efforts by the success of a similar institution at Halle, in Prussia, founded in 1696 by A. H. Franke, professor of divinity. This is the largest charitable establishment for poor children in the world, containing 2000 inmates, and is in a flourishing condition. We will here let our author speak for himself:

'Franke is long since gone to his rest, but he spoke to my soul in 1826, and he is speaking to my soul now; and to his example I am greatly indebted in having been stirred up to care about poor children in general, and about poor orphans in particular. . . .

'At the last census in 1851, there were, in England and Wales, thirty-nine orphan establishments, and the total number of orphans provided for through them amounted only to 3764; but at the time the New Orphan House was being built, there were about 6000 young orphans in the prisons of England. Does not this fact call aloud for an extension of orphan institutions? By God's help, I will do what I can to keep poor orphans from prison.'

The utter abnegation of self which pervades the work is remarkable and characteristic. 'What have I done,' he cries out in one place, 'that men should praise me? I have only sought to be used as the honoured instrument of saving young children, who have neither father nor mother, from sin and vice.' Truly, such men are in the world, but not of it.

Contributions appear to arrive from all parts of the globe, and from all kinds and conditions of men. Here are a few entries, for example: 'From negro brethren in Demerara, 12 dollars;' 'From an archdeacon, and one of the Queen's chaplains, 12 guineas;' 'From one of the orphans formerly under our care, a sovereign;' 'From Mount Lebanon, L.2, and from Orleans, five francs;' 'From an Israelitish gentleman, an entire stranger, L.5;' 'From a shepherd in Australia, who had read my narrative while tending his flock, 12s.' The amounts vary from a single farthing to thousands of pounds; and the receipt of a copper coin, or the presentation of a check for L.5000, is recorded in an uniformly grateful strain.

Nor is it to money alone that assistance is confined. One gentleman offers his services gratuitously as an architect, and another as a surgeon. Another gives glass for the three hundred windows of the new building, and others send jewellery and ornaments, silver spoons and tea-pots, watches, gold and silver, old coins and needlework—to be sold for the benefit of the institution. On one day, 'three autographs of William IV., two of Sir Robert Peel, and one of Lord Melbourne,' were received; and on another, 'a Coverdale Bible of 1535, perfected almost sheet by sheet.' Perhaps the most singular gift of this kind was, 'A silver medal, given to the donor for being engaged in the taking of Java; but, laying down his honour, he desires to have this medal used to lay a stone in the new

building.' Then there are donations of books, of coals, of provisions, and of clothes—old and new; donations, indeed, in almost every conceivable form. And in this manner, to sum up all in his own words, 'without any one having been personally applied to for anything, the sum of L.84,441, 6s. 3½d. has been given to me for the orphans since the commencement of the work.' And greatly has it been needed, for, in addition to the expense of purchasing land, and building and furnishing the asylum, the present average expense for each of the orphans is stated at L.12, 6s. 8d. per annum.

Not the least peculiar feature in the subscription-list is the absence of all personal publicity. Those who give to the New Orphan Asylum must do so from a pure and unmixed feeling of charity, for their names are carefully withheld; even their initials are rarely given; nor would any offer induce a departure from this rule.

No sectarian doctrines are taught in the schools, neither is any interest necessary to obtain admission for orphans. If they be deprived of father and mother, and in distress, that is sufficient passport to the large warm heart and helping-hand of George Muller. Long may his life be spared, and his labours blest!

PRESENT AND FUTURE OF MECHANICS' INSTITUTES.

It is not many years since the upper classes of this country enjoyed exclusively, as if by prescription, the advantage of newspapers, periodicals, and books. In towns, even of a moderate size, they had their reading-rooms and libraries; while their artificer brethren, when they would indulge in intellectual luxuries, were obliged to be satisfied—if indeed they had the luck to come into turn at all—with a ten minutes' glance at the one political paper of the tap-room. Times are now changed. Throughout a considerable portion of the country, even in places where the upper classes are not numerous enough to afford a news-room, the working-classes—whose name is Legion everywhere—have their mechanics' institute; and this has not only its reading-room, but its educational classes, its lectures on interesting and important subjects, its concerts of music, and its enlivening soirées. Most of these institutions are self-supporting; but all are largely assisted by what used to be considered the antagonistic class, with contributions of money, gratuitous lectures, and gratuitous teaching. Even ladies assume the part of schoolmistresses—for there are female classes as well as male—and may be seen patiently assisting their humbler sisters in reading, writing, cutting out clothes, &c. Of what is this institution not susceptible? Already it has begun to add to its system penny-banks, which inculcate lessons, as good as any of the rest, to its juvenile members; and already access to higher than mechanical employments has been freely opened to such of the members as turn to best account the scholastic and practical teachings they enjoy.

The institution of examinations by the Society of Arts is certainly the most important event in the history of mechanics' institutes. The Society offers to test the acquirements of the pupils, and to bestow prizes on the most deserving, with certificates of progress which will be worth more to the possessors than any number of ordinary letters of recommendation. This fact will be understood when it is known that from four to five hundred of the leading firms have formally consented to receive these certificates as 'testimonials worthy of credit.' When this system comes to maturity by being responded to and aided by the institutes themselves, the jealous complaint will cease of clever but friendless young men, for the poorest youth in a well-doing village may look

upon the Society of Arts as a powerful friend, from whom he will receive a warm introduction to the first commercial and manufacturing houses in the kingdom.

There is another great advantage which has opened to the institutes—their banding together in a certain local union, which gives the poorest and most recent some share of the advantages of money and experience. The Yorkshire Union has just published its annual Report, which shews very clearly what may be done in this way. The Report itself is a history, carried on from year to year, of a certain number of institutes, and must be an admirable guide in the reformation of old and the formation of new ones. A delegate from each institute in the Union is sent to the annual meeting, and each institute furnishes its own Report for the period. The central committee gives advice, and, as far as possible, aid; it inquires into the merits of lecturers, and publishes the names of the paid and gratuitous; it sends its agent, when requested, to assist the local committees, and to deliver lectures; and finally, it lends books, in fifty volumes at a time, to institutes in need of the supply. Such advantages are obtained at a mere nominal fee: 5s. per annum when the members are 70 or under; 10s. when they are between that and 150; and 20s. when they exceed that number.

One interesting feature of the Union is the Itinerating Village Library, for the advantage of the inhabitants of villages where no mechanics' institute or local library exists. A subscriber to the library pays 1d. per week or 1s. per quarter in advance. Places where there are 25 subscribers have the use of 50 volumes, and for each additional 25 subscribers an additional 50 volumes. The history of this system, as given in the Report, seems to shew that a reading-room is essential to its full success. In three places, since the last Report, the result has been the establishment of independent libraries—the nuclei, probably, of institutes. The system exists also in Norfolk, where its operations were carried on last winter in forty parishes. 'Upwards of 3000 publications had been issued and circulated in the associated parishes, and the Report adduced instances of the anxiety of the labourers to read, or to have read to them, the contents of the society's book-cases. These cases are thirty-one in number; they circulate among a population of about 16,000, or three-fourths of the whole district.'

The number of institutes in the Yorkshire Union is 130, with 20,960 members. The annual income of 89 institutes is £10,324. To shew the proportion of the sexes, we may add that in 100 institutes there are 17,387 males and 1112 females. Among the few complaints made in the Report is the falling off in the number of female members, amounting on the average to 14·6 last year, and 10 per cent. the year before. The following remarks are made on this subject in the Report from Ripon: 'To those who know anything of the domestic economy of our poor, it need not be said how much of its disorder, extravagance, and misery is owing to the want of proper training in early life. The daughters of the poor, sometimes from want of means, sometimes because the hard-working mothers with large families require their help at home, are taken from school at the very time when its restraints, discipline, and instruction are most likely to be beneficial. For the benefit of such, the ladies who work in our institute give their time and energies. On working evenings, they are in attendance to give instruction in cutting-out, making, mending, knitting, and whatever else in this department may be of use, as tending to the better ordering, comfort, and economy of the poor man's home. While the work is going on, an instructive book is read, remarks are made, and questions asked.'

The discouraging fact of the diminishing number of such pupils would seem, on the face of the Report, to be strangely at variance with another—that an increase in the infinitesimal fees does not seem to affect, in general, the number of the male pupils: but both these facts seem to us to depend upon the same principle. The average subscription is three half-pence per week, which usually includes not merely the classes, but frequently the library, lecture, and news-room. But what kind of education is it possible to give for this sum? In the sixty-seven best institutions of Yorkshire, we are told, 75 per cent. of the pupils were learning nothing more than reading, writing, and arithmetic. This, however small the outlay for each, was a bad speculation, for such acquisitions would hardly improve the learners' prospects; while, on the other hand, an increase to 4d. or 6d. per week would be considered prudently spent money, inasmuch as it would open out to them access to a chance of higher and more remunerative employment. As for the girls, of what pecuniary advantage is education of any kind to them? Why should not the mothers have their assistance at home, and save the half-pence their classes cost? These questions may be, to a partial extent, answered in domiciliary visits by the benevolent instructresses; but the practical solution will come before long of itself. The educated young men will not marry profoundly ignorant women, and the mothers will then see that it is an excellent speculation to leave their daughters for a reasonable time in the institute.

From a comparative table given in the Report, it is clear that lectures are not so popular a feature as they have been; and in the Reports of the affiliated institutes, the complaint is pretty general of the small attendance on such occasions. This seems to us to be owing to the subjects being very frequently too high-pitched. In the lists of lectures we find a great proportion that would do very well in the institutions of the gentry, but are quite out of place in the mechanics' institutes of small towns and villages. The taste of the institutes is shewn pretty clearly in the issues of books from the libraries. At Leeds, where the members are probably of a better class than usual, theology, philosophy and education, poetry and the drama, attracted, on an average, 1400 or 1500 readers; voyages and travels, 2300; fine arts and literature, 3000; history and biography, between 5000 and 6000; the exact sciences, chemistry and natural philosophy, a few hundreds; and fiction, 14,166. The amusing and the practically useful are the most popular subjects for the masses: the elegant, the learned, and the *recherche* fit audience find—though few.

The Reports of the affiliated institutes appended to the general Report of the Yorkshire Union, are exceedingly interesting. Some of these societies are shewn to be in a most flourishing state, while others are in the depths of misfortune, the committee only consoling themselves with the idea, that an energetic canvass of the place may give a turn to events. The most frequent complaint, however, is of want of accommodation: this chokes the whole concern, keeping down even the classes, and is the more vexatious that the sum required to build a complete institute is only about £500.

We have ourselves, however, no fear of the ultimate result. Our only difficulty is in imagining how far an institution of such capabilities is to go as a lever for elevating the lower masses of the people. The thirst of these lower masses for knowledge communicated in an attractive form may be guessed by a statistical statement on the subject of free libraries and museums read to the Association for the Promotion of Social Science by Mr David Chadwick of Salford. By this document we learn incidentally, that last year the total number of visitors of the British Museum was

361,000, while that of the Royal Free Museum of Salford was 580,000, and is expected this year to exceed 800,000. The cause of this extraordinary difference can only be, that the British Museum is closed at six o'clock in summer, while that of Salford is kept open till dusk: in other words, the difference between the numbers must be composed in great part of the working-classes.

MY INTERVIEW WITH AN ACHENESE PRINCESS.

Not many years ago, a severe attack of what is known in India as jungle-fever compelled me, at the suggestion of my medical advisers, to seek change of air and scenery, by visiting for a period that most delightful and hospitable of eastern islands, Pulo Penang.

Whilst there, I was so fortunate as to be the guest of a worthy Scotch merchant, a near relative of Viscount Strathallan; and, as he had frequent commercial intercourse with the least frequented ports on the west coast of Sumatra, I gladly availed myself of his offer to accompany him on a betel-nut collecting cruise along the Pedir coast.

The vessel we sailed in was his own, and in every way fitted out suitably for the cruise in question, which was one not unattended with danger. The people of Sumatra, especially those about the west coast, were notoriously treacherous, and by inclination and rearing, a horde of ruthless pirates—a blood-thirsty, reckless set, in whose hearts humanity had never yet found a lodging-place; consequently, we went well armed: the ship carried six guns, and an unusual complement of men, including ten Manilla gunners. We had three officers besides the captain, the supercargo, and myself, all armed with pistols and cutlasses; and last, though by no means least, a famous old dog, the gift of a Danish captain, a creature nearly as high as a moderate-sized calf, and the best and most faithful watch we could rely upon in times of danger. After the watches were set, and the eight o'clock grog and biscuits had been discussed, I should have liked to see the man that durst venture upon deck before Phaon had been duly warned, and coaxed into recognition. He would instantly have been extended upon his back on the deck, and have lain there, under the animal's powerful paws till the captain's or some other well-known voice interposed for his liberation.

With such means, offensive and defensive, a few cases of Spanish dollars, and a full cargo of Turkey red cloth, we sailed from Penang one evening towards sunset; and after encountering the usual provoking calms, so prevalent between that island and Diamond Point, eventually anchored off Achen Head—one of a rather considerable fleet of trading-vessels, principally English and Danish, which were there assembled for the purpose of sharing amicably among them the various points of the coast, so that the trading operations of one captain might not clash with the interests of another.

In the course of a few days the commodore of this betel-nut fleet—a veteran Dane, the oldest trader to Sumatra—had appointed the vessels to the various trading-ports along the coast; and to us fell the lot of loading an intermediate cargo of rice, and carrying it to Penang; the supercargo in the meantime remaining upon the coast, bartering Turkey red for betel-nut, and warehousing the cargo in convenient sheds against our return.

Of Achen itself, I have very little to say; an open and exposed roadstead, with a low uninviting coast, to reach which a formidable shoal had to be crossed, possessed but small attraction for the little floating colony of Europeans there assembled; and, in security from the risks to be incurred amongst a people

notoriously treacherous and cruel, we found ample occupation in fishing alongside the ships, especially by torch-light, or in shooting the wild ducks and geese, which hourly swept overhead, bound to those inland-lakes reputed to be so abundant in Sumatra, and equally famous for the deadly miasma their vicinity emits. Even had we possessed the inclination, our time was limited; and before the expiration of a week, the small fleet had separated, and was scattered over the intervening coast between Diamond Point and Achen Head. We ourselves anchored off a wretched village called Psatu Barra, so far from the land, that the natives brought off the rice in some of the largest proas, many of which were armed; all well equipped, and so dangerous, as to oblige us to permit only one boat to come alongside at a time, whilst a main-deck watch rigidly observed the movements of all the other boats hovering about us. The rice was measured over at the gangway; and at every tenth measure, its equivalent, either in Turkey red or dollars, was handed to the proprietor, who, seated upon the poop, smoked pipe after pipe of English tobacco, and drank brandy neat with as much apparent impunity as though it had been spring-water.

We worked day and night, for the moonlight favoured us, and in less than three days had completed our cargo. Not only the hold, but every available cabin had been stuffed full of rice in bulk; and the result of this glut in cargo had well-nigh proved our destruction. Just when midway between Sumatra and Penang, we were overtaken by one of those fearful squalls so prevalent off Diamond Point, and which come upon the unwary so unexpectedly as to endanger the safety of the vessel. Our captain was an old trader, but the great serenity of the night had, I am persuaded, lulled him into an unsuspicious nap. At all events, the first notification we had of the squall was the crash of the topmasts going over the side, and the simultaneous jerk of the vessel as she threw us out of our berths, and bent, gunwale under, to the force of the wind. The cabin light had been smashed to atoms; the binnacle swept over the side; the heavens were obscured by an impenetrable pall; and in the alarm and confusion of the moment, Buxo, the owner's Hindostanee servant, and myself, rushing from our respective berths towards the companion-ladder, were suddenly overtaken by, and completely hemmed in with, what in our alarm we supposed to be the sea making a clean breach over the vessel. Never was there a more ludicrous spectacle than we must have presented to the astonished Seacunny,* when he came below, horn-lantern in hand, to ascertain the amount of damage. The bulwarks of the side-cabins had given way under the pressure, and the whole volume of loose rice stowed therein had literally and *de facto* nailed Buxo and myself to the opposite side of the vessel—a dilemma from which we were liberated by the assistance of the lascars, as soon as they recovered from their convulsions of laughter.

After discharging our cargo of rice at Penang, we returned to the Pedir coast, and anchored off the town of Pedir itself, which was the chief city of that independent principality, then under the sway of a *ranees* or princess. Her highness, who had been previously apprised of our advent, had caused a considerable quantity of betel-nut to be warehoused in the immediate vicinity of her palace; and the day after our arrival, we were invited ashore to a friendly interview with the royal lady: at least, such was the intimation conveyed to us by an interpreter, a native, who at the same time hinted mysteriously, that we had better land well armed and prepared against treachery.

If truth must be told, not one amongst us relished

* Manilla helmsman.

the honour conferred; for my own part, despite curiosity, I would have much preferred being left on board; but for mutual security, it was best that all of us that could be spared should leave the vessel; and with as many arms secreted about our person as we could conveniently carry, we left the ship's side, and pulled in towards the landing-place. The distance was considerable, so that there was no hope of succour from the vessel, should that be required. As we approached, our spirits did not rise at the prospect before us: the boat had to be pushed over a very shallow bar, and we then entered a narrow river, whose banks were lined with luxuriant verdure, till a sudden bend shut out the view of the sea, and brought us into the presence of some forty or fifty half-naked savages, who were all armed with formidable Malay creeses, many of them also carrying spears. The loud shouting and capering of these ruffians seemed anything but conciliatory: however, the interpreter who accompanied us assured us that all was right, and we jumped ashore, determined at all hazards to sell our lives as dearly as possible.

Forming a kind of guard of honour, preceded by a drum and one or two ragged banners, this company escorted us into a dense, and apparently impenetrable brushwood, from which, however, we speedily emerged again, coming suddenly upon a wide clear space of ground, which had hitherto been entirely shut out from view, and in the centre of which rose a bamboo and mud stockade, containing the palace of the princess, and one or two smaller houses. The stockade had but one entrance-gate, and though it mounted six guns, was in so deplorable a condition, that the report alone of these cannon would have been almost sufficient to shake it to the ground. The palace was more substantially built, and consisted of a large bamboo and mat edifice, raised a considerable height off the ground, and supported upon the stumps of trees that had been evidently left there for the purpose when the rest of the forest was cleared away. Up a rickety old ladder our party climbed into the presence of royalty, and whilst her own subjects crouched on all-fours around, we were permitted to approach the *musnud*—which consisted of an empty rice-basket reversed—and to shake hands after English fashion.

Of the princess's personal appearance I have but little to say, save that she was portly, like most orientals who live well; whilst her garments consisted merely of a gold and silk tissue petticoat, with a loose shawl thrown over the shoulders. By her side was seated an extremely good-looking girl about fifteen years of age, who proved to be her only daughter. The floor of the apartment was liberally strewn with coco-nuts, yams, and a great variety of delicious fruits peculiar to these parts; there were also huge piles of betel-nut and the betel-leaf, from which the assembled native courtiers supplied themselves; whilst one man, who may have been the prime-minister, was continually occupied in pounding the ingredients in a little mortar, from which he supplied the princess, who, having lost a great many of her teeth, was thus saved the trouble of mastication. I need hardly say that, owing to this practice, and frequent expectorations, the floor was spotted like a leopard-skin.

We were welcomed with much courtesy, and feasted with fruits, rice-cakes, and the fresh milk of the coco-nut; then tobacco, rolled up in dry leaves, was handed round, and, princess and all, we fell a-smoking, and, through the medium of the interpreter, the palaver part of the business commenced. The princess undertook to supply us with a full cargo of betel-nut—the greater portion of which had been already collected—and to take, as equivalent, certain pieces of Turkey red. These preliminaries being arranged, preparations for dinner were commenced on rather

a large scale. Immense quantities of rice were boiled in hollow bamboos; and from the screaming in the poultry-yard, we were convinced that great slaughter was going on there. The cookery was carried on down stairs under the immediate supervision of the princess's daughter, and in an incredibly short space a really sumptuous repast was served up on wooden platters. Some of the dishes were novel and tasty, consisting of chickens stewed in coco-nut milk, well seasoned with green chillies and onions; baked yams were also by no means contemptible. After partaking of this hospitality, we were escorted back to the boat, which we found deep laden with fruit, vegetables, and poultry, the gift of her highness the princess of Pedir.

After this interview, I visited the shore frequently, and though but slightly versed in the Malay tongue, managed to carry on trifling conversations. Emboldened by impunity, I often pushed my walks further perhaps than prudence might have dictated; but the younger of the princesses generally accompanied me upon these tours, and her presence alone was a sufficient guarantee for my safety. The girlish delight she evinced whenever I was fortunate enough to bring down some gaily plumaged bird with my gun, amply recompensed her for any fatigue or trouble.

A few days prior to our departure, three of the Malay lascars deserted, and, having obtained the princess's permission to search for them in the environs of her domains, accompanied by a native guard, we penetrated far into the country, both on land and by water. On the river, the scenery was desolate and wild. Now and then, a huge rhinoceros would poke up his nose in unpleasant proximity to the boat; but, apparently more alarmed than ourselves, would as speedily retreat. Once, and only once, I caught sight of one beautiful bird of the bird of paradise species; the trees by the water-side teemed with animation, and I do not remember to have ever seen so great a variety of the monkey-tribe as were here, swinging from branch to branch.

On shore I found the generality of the houses constructed upon the same principle as the princess's palace—that is, elevated upon poles. The country seemed in a high state of cultivation, and each house had a well-stocked poultry-yard and kitchen-garden, upon the produce of which, and the abounding fruits, in addition to a large supply of rice, the people subsisted and thrived.

A rather unexpected and ludicrous circumstance brought my visit to Pedir to a sudden close: the princess had set her heart upon retaining me on the island as the future husband of her only daughter, and to this intent offered my friends several boat-loads of betel-nut as an equivalent. I am sorry to say that I was ungallant and unambitious enough to object to the intended honour, although, if I had known my own interest better, I might by this time have been a prince in my own right. The old lady, however, was exceedingly obstinate; and refusing to continue any further shipments until her demands had been complied with, we were compelled to go foraging at other ports; and very shortly afterwards, I bade a final adieu to the Pedir coast and my prospects of royalty.

KOUAN-FOU-YOUAN.

AN ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF A WIFE.
FROM THE CHINESE.

IN the fifth watch of the first day of the year, when winter reigns in all his severity, my tender wife died. Is there on earth a man more unhappy than I? Oh, if thou wert still alive, I would give thee a new robe for the new year! But, alas, thou hast descended to the gloomy kingdom watered by the Yellow Fountain. Come to me in the middle of

the night, that husband and wife may see one another again; come to me in the third watch; let me renew the illusions of the past.

In the second moon, at the birth of the spring, the sun shines longer in the sky, and each family washes its robes and linen in pure water. Husbands who have still their wives, love to adorn them with new clothes; but I, who have lost mine, I am a prey to a grief that wastes my life away. I have removed from my sight the little shoes that enclosed her pretty feet. Sometimes I have thought of taking another companion; but where should I find another so beautiful, so witty, and so kind!

In the third moon, at the epoch called Taing-ming, the peach-tree opens its rose-coloured blossoms, and the willow begins to display its green tresses. Husbands who have still their wives, go with them to visit the graves of their relations. But I, who have lost mine, I go alone to visit her grave. When I see the spot where her ashes repose, burning tears stream down my cheeks. I present to her funeral-offerings; I burn for her images of gilded paper. 'Tender wife!' I exclaim, with a tearful voice, 'where art thou? Tender wife! where art thou?' But, alas, she is deaf to my cries! I see a solitary tomb, but I cannot see my wife. * * *

In the sixth moon, at the epoch called San-fo, it is difficult to support the burning heat of the day. The rich and poor then spread their clothes to air. I will expose a silken robe to the sun's hot rays. Look, here is the robe she wore on festival days!—here are the elegant shoes that enclosed her pretty feet! But where is my wife? Oh, where is the mother of my children? I feel as if a cold steel-blade were dividing my heart. * * *

The fifteenth day of the eighth moon, when her disc shines with its greatest splendour, men and women offer to the gods melons and cakes, which have a rounded form like that of the orb of night.* Husbands and wives go two and two to walk in the country, and enjoy the sweet moonlight; but the round disc of the moon can only remind me of the wife I have lost. At times, to relieve my woe, I pour for myself a cup of generous wine; at times I take my guitar, but scarcely can my trembling hand draw forth a sound. My relations and friends come, turn by turn, to invite me; but my heart, full of bitterness, refuses to share their pleasures.

In the ninth moon, at the epoch called Tchong-yang, the chrysanthemums open their golden cups, and every garden exhales a balmy odour. I would gather a bunch of newly blown flowers, if I had still a wife whose hair they could adorn. My eyes are wet with tears, my hands are contracted by grief, and beat my fleshless breast. I enter into the elegant chamber that was once my wife's; my two children follow me, and come sadly to embrace my knees. Each one takes me by the hand, and calls me with a choking voice. By their tears, their sobs, their gestures, they ask me for their mother.

The first day of the tenth moon, both rich and poor present winter-clothes to their wives. But I who have no wife, to whom shall I offer winter-clothes? When I think of her who shared my bed, who rested on the same pillow, I burn for her images of gilded paper, and my tears flow fast. I send these offerings to her who now dwells beside the Yellow Fountain. I know not whether these funeral gifts will be of use to the shade of her who is no more, but at least her husband will have paid her a tribute of love and regret.

In the eleventh moon, when I have saluted winter, I call my beautiful wife. In my cold bed, I double up my body, I dare not stretch out my legs, and half of the silken counterpane covers an empty place. I sigh and invoke heaven; I pray for pity on a husband who passes solitary nights. At the third watch, I rise without having slept, and I weep until the dawn.

In the twelfth moon, in the midst of winter's cold, I called my tender wife. 'Where art thou?' I said. 'I think of thee all day, yet I cannot see thy face.' The last night of the year, she appeared to me in a dream: she pressed my hand in hers; she smiled on me with tearful eyes; she

encircled me with her caressing arms, and filled my soul with happiness. 'I pray thee,' she said to me, 'to weep no more when thou rememberest me; henceforth, I will come thus each night to visit thee in thy dreams.'

THE STRANGER.

THE wedding-bells are ringing as if it could not be
That there was any heart to-day which was not full of glee.

The wedding-bells are ringing; you hear it in their sound
That this is a high holiday for all the country round.

The wedding-bells are ringing, drums beat, and bugles
blow;

A stranger passing through the place the cause of this
would know.

He asks the brawny blacksmith who stands before his shed,
Wearing a coat with buttons bright, as if he too would
wed.

The blacksmith answers smiling: 'You come from far
away,

Else you would know of Lady Grace, and of her wedding-
day.

'Tis a day of great rejoicing; and if your heart is light,
I'd bid you see our village sports, and join the dance
to-night.'

The stranger stands there gazing—the carriages pass by:
'That's Lady Grace,' the blacksmith says—'she with the
brave, bright eye.'

Gay horsemen follow after the carriages and four,
And all are trotting merrily towards the church's door.

Without the church the stranger stays, and hears the
words begin;

He hears her voice—his eye grows dim—his heart grows
cold within.

And now the altar's silent, and with her joyous train,
The pride of all the country side comes smiling forth
again.

But soon her footstep falters, and soon her smile has fled:
How can it be that she is sad, who was this instant wed?

She sees the stranger standing there, and it seems as if
there lay,

'Twixt her and all her gladness, a shadow on the way.

But now the look is over—she turns away her eyes:

The past it can be hers no more—her path before her lies.
E. F.

DECAY OF IRON RAILINGS.

Every one must have observed the destructive combination of lead and iron from railings being fixed in stone with the former metal, and the oxygen of the atmosphere keeping up the galvanic action between the two metals. This waste might be prevented by substituting zinc for lead, in which case the galvanic influence would be inverted: the whole of its action would fall on the zinc, and the iron would be preserved; and as zinc is oxidated with difficulty, it would, at the same time, be scarcely acted on; the one remaining uninjured, and the other nearly so. Paint formed of the oxide of zinc, for the same reason, preserves iron exposed to the atmosphere infinitely better than the ordinary paint, which is composed of oxide of lead.—*Timbs's Popular Errors.*

Printed and Published by W. and R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH. Also sold by WILLIAM ROBERTSON, 23 Upper Sackville Street, DUBLIN, and all Booksellers.

* The full moon presides over happy marriages.